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**EXAMINERS AMENDMENT****Claim 1 (Currently Amended)** A variable length decoding device comprising:

a decoding unit operable to decode different kinds of variable length codes encoded in accordance with a plurality of encoding systems;

a stream input unit operable to input the different kinds of variable length codes; and

an interface unit operable to interface said decoding unit with said stream input unit,

wherein said stream input unit and said interface unit are commonly used in decoding the different kinds of variable length codes, and

wherein said decoding unit notifies said stream input unit of a code length upon completion of the decoding of the different kinds of variable length codes, and

wherein a position of stream data is always appropriately controlled, such that a handshake protocol can be established between said stream input unit and said decoding unit, and such that a difference in a latency by said decoding unit can be absorbed.

**Claims 2-6 (Cancelled)****Claim 7 (Previously Presented)** The variable length decoding device as defined in claim 1, wherein said stream input unit comprises:

a shift register operable to store register data consisting of a part of stream data;

a data selector operable to transfer the stream data in a fixed bit width from said shift register to said interface unit; and

a pointer controlling unit operable to control a stream pointer to determine a position of the stream data.

**Claim 8 (Previously Presented)** The variable length decoding device as defined in claim 7, wherein said pointer controlling unit moves, in accordance with the notified code length, a position of the stream data to be pointed at by the stream pointer.

**Claim 9 (Previously Presented)** The variable length decoding device as defined in claim 7, wherein said interface unit comprises:

a stream data bus operable to hold the stream data and transfer the stream data to said decoding unit;

a stream enable signal line operable to hold a stream enable signal and transfer the stream enable signal to said decoding unit, the stream enable signal indicating an interruption of decoding; and

a decoding start signal line operable to hold a decoding start signal and transfer the decoding start signal to said decoding unit, the decoding start signal indicating a start of the decoding.